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1 The over-exposure of an often limited aspect of the history of the Surrealist movement has suggested that this lengthy adventure was numbered among the definitive conquests of knowledge, both in the artistic arena and in the literary domain. This illusion has gone hand in hand, since the 1960s, with a broad and, when all is said and done, normal rejection of the Surrealist imagination. Because such reactions have considerably died down, there are still plenty of "blind spots" to be revealed today, in order to reach an overall view of that multi-facetted movement. Is it not by now turning towards its less famous figures and to less hackneyed questions that we shall enable it to more surely sidestep clichés and caricatures?

2 The re-publication of the works of Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron, along with the light shed on the personality of Georges Limbour (1900-1970) by Martine Colin-Picon and Françoise Nicol, are part and parcel of this retrospective and sidelong eye, seeing what usually eludes the hasty or simply malicious commentator.

3 *Inventer le réel : le Surréalisme et le roman (1922-1950)* proposes a re-creation of the history of a prohibition. In the *Manifeste du Surréalisme*, André Breton declared his refusal of everything, in the novel, that stemmed from the distressing banality of the daily round.

Condemning the fastidious description of an essentially opaque reality, he conversely extolled the invention of a surreality, without any escape towards any kind of transcendence whatsoever. This investigation of the novel came about from a question: how can André Breton stubbornly denounce novelistic falsehood and at the same time pay tribute to Julien Gracq's *Le Château d'Argol*? There is perforce a misunderstanding about the nature of the novel's discredited reputation, which, incidentally, André Breton did not initiate: suffice it to think of Paul Valéry declaring himself incapable of writing that *the Marquise went out at five o'clock*, and the thrilling things that then ensued. Essentially, it is not overall the category of "novel" that creates a problem, but the belief, even today, in the interest of allegedly realist psychological descriptions. Understood in an ordinary way, the novel leads by its very nature to the acceptance of reality as it is: it is reactionary. The trial set up here is thus not aesthetic but moral in nature. The cardinal idea of Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron's masterwork consists in thinking of the novel as the "touchstone of Surrealism". Without challenging the supremacy of poetry, she reveals how the novelistic question has counted in the development of Surrealist ways of being. In calling upon Jean-Paul Sartre and Guy Rosolato, she highlights an initial divide based on two diverging conceptions of time: those espoused by André Breton and Louis Aragon. For the former, time is fundamentally discontinuous, an opportunity for self-analysis through the encounter with what he would in 1932 call "objective chance". From the event there radiates the perforce partial sense of an existence, forever having to be put back together again. Despite appearances, a kinship does exist between the thinking of André Breton and Sartre's existentialism.

4 The other way is opened up by Louis Aragon; it postulates a time of continuity created by an *incipit* triggering the act of writing, ever mindful of linguistic games. So: "There is no such thing as a Surrealist novel, but there is something novelistic that is scattered and strong, which has the hues of the modern marvellous, and its ferocity in the "'capsizing of destiny'".

5 This duality ushered in by the Breton/Aragon divide might also be applied to the field of visual creation, which right away reduces all simplistic attempts in the field of art to nothing. However, once destroyed by the rupture with Louis Aragon, who had become a Stalinist, this ground-breaking duality did not hamper the development of the movement up until the 1960s. The side of temporal discontinuity, which was André Breton's, calls for a morality which has nothing in common with that of the dialectical equivalence of opposites peculiar to the fiction of Aragon. Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron incidentally explains how the conception of freedom, according to Louis Aragon, leads to the experience of denial.

6 We know that the history of Surrealism is staked out by breaks and ruptures, often more voluntary than decreed. The conflict, for its part, is consubstantial. Among those who moved away from Surrealism, the figure of Georges Limbour had hitherto remained extremely discreet. The fine editorial work done by Martine Colin-Picon and Françoise Nicol for Le Bruit du temps offers an imposing volume of some 400 reports and writings on art penned between 1924 and 1969 for various periodicals, often aimed at a general readership. According to Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron, the author of *La Chasse au mérou* is perhaps even more innovative, including from the narrative viewpoint, in his art critical essays. Since 1923, before contributing to the tract *Un Cadavre* (1929) against André Breton, Georges Limbour had connections with the Surrealists, while remaining closer to his friends in Rue Blomet, in particular Michel Leiris and André Masson.

Working abroad until 1937, he in fact kept his distance from the great internal conflicts, and his full activity as a 'spectator of the arts' did not really get off the ground until the post-war years.

7 The least we can say is that Georges Limbour regarded Surrealism with circumspection, although he embraced a conception of art which, in spirit, was not foreign to it. His approach was poetic in nature, based on emotion; so pure abstraction seemed of little interest to him, unlike a more lyrical form of abstraction.

8 Françoise Nicol shows that Georges Limbour's critical writing sidesteps pigeonholing: neither a specialist nor simple a writer on art, his articles can be read like an echo of his poetic and fictional oeuvre. As in life, Georges Limbour invented for himself a very unstable literary situation which contributed to his obscurity... Is this refusal of an identifiable position in the artistic relationship not also a Surrealist feature? The unassignable place of this way of talking about art seems all the more original today because it is inaudible alongside the hegemonic discourses of the specialist and the art critic, whose audience is nevertheless infinitesimal. Georges Limbour wrote at a time when the art world was possibly less closed in on itself.

9 In the 1945 Salon d'Automne, it was with difficulty that he hid his satisfaction over what he called Surrealist decadence judged slightly prematurely by the yardstick of pictures produced just by Labisse! A reading of his report of the international exhibition of Surrealism in 1947 (Galerie Maeght)—a "Luna Park of special effects"—helps us to measure the breadth of his mistrust with regard to the André Breton group. Even when figures such as Wifredo Lam and Victor Brauner were involved, there were still reservations. In favour of a sober method of exhibiting, he reckoned that the oeuvre should speak for itself: Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Jean Dubuffet, André Beaudin, Fernand Léger, Tal Coat, Suzanne Roger and, at times, Jean Fautrier all enjoyed his favour. He admirably manages to make the artist very present for us when he visits the studios of Germaine Richier, Henri Laurens, Alberto Giacometti, Georges Braque and, *post mortem*, Wassily Kandinsky. To the end he defended André Masson, his unfailing friend to whom he devoted a very large number of writings, downplaying, as much as he could, the painter's links with the Surrealist movement. Masson's painting, as Françoise Nicol notes, represented his paradigm.

10 Here is a professional philosopher, in truth a "born poet" (Michel Leiris), who, ostensibly, scarcely calls upon his theoretical glasses; his wandering eye, which tears asunder the excessively rigid categories of reality and imagination, makes us traverse in detail painting produced between the post-war years and the 1960s. The busy pictorial activity in Paris, without forgetting the retrospective shows put on by the Galerie Charpentier and in museums in the capital and provinces alike (Antibes, Le Palais des Papes in Avignon), is shown to us as if by a friend offering his unbiased opinions. His spectator maxim is honest. After years of theoretical excesses, he can only express his delight: "My dear friends, if we find no great pleasure deriving from our knowledge, let us not be afraid of remaining ignorant."